

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 OMB-01 SAM-01 SAB-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 MC-02

AID-05 ACDA-07 SAJ-01 IO-11 /105 W
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FM AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 0141

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALEXANDRIA 0244

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EWWT, EG, UR

SUBJECT: COMMENTS OF EGYPTIAN NAVY COMMANDER IN CHIEF

1. FOLLOWING ELICITED BY CONGEN OFFICER FROM EGYPTIAN NAVY
COMMANDER IN CHIEF, VICE ADMIRAL FOUAD ZIKRY, DURING SMALL
DINNER PARTY ON APRIL 4.

2. THE SOVIET NAVY ATTACHED CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO THE
FACILITIES IT ENJOYED AT THE ALEXANDRIA SHIPYARD. IT WILL TAKE
SOME TIME BEFORE THE SOVIETS COULD DEVELOP SUBSTITUTE FACILITIES
IN LIBYA OR SYRIA. ADMIRAL ZIKRY SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT
WOULD HAPPEN TO THE SHIPS SCHEDULED TO BE BUILT IN THE SHIPYARD
FOR THE USSR, BUT SAID HE WOULD BE GLAD TO HAVE SOME OF THE
SMALL TANKERS FOR THE EGYPTIAN NAVY. HE SAID
THAT ALTHOUGH THESE TANKERS AND THE 13,000 TON FREIGHTERS THE
YARD BUILDS ARE OF SOVIET DESIGN, THESE DESIGNS ARE SIMILAR
TO THOSE FOUND ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD. EVEN IF THE SOVIETS
MAKE A COMPLETE BREAK WITH THE SHIPYARD, THERE SHOULD BE NO
PROBLEM GETTING NECESSARY COMPONENTS ABROAD, AND THUS
BUILD SOVIET-DESIGNED SHIPS WITHOUT SOVIET ASSISTANCE.

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3. EGYPTIAN NAVY REPAIR FACILITIES WERE DESIGNED TO BE INTEGRATED

WITH THE FACILITIES AT THE ALEXANDRIA SHIPYARD. THUS ALTHOUGH THE NAVY HAS ITS OWN WORKSHOPS, TWO FLOATING DRYDOCK AND DOES MUCH OF ITS OWN MAINTENANCE, A PORTION OF NAVY UPKEEP IS HANDLED AT THE SHIPYARD. ALTHOUGH THE SHIPYARD CAN FABRICATE SOME MATERIAL SUCH AS PIPES AND PLATES OR REWIND ELECTRIC MOTORS, IT CANNOT SUPPLY THE MORE SOPHISTICATED COMPONENTS NEEDED BY THE NAVY. ADMIRAL ZIKRY SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE SOVIETS HAD CURTAILED THE FLOW OF SPARES INTO EGYPT, THE NAVY HAD BEEN PARTIALLY SUCCESSFUL IN FINDING OTHER FOREIGN SUPPLIERS. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, ADMIRAL ZIKRY SAID HE HAD NOT BEEN APPROACHED BY FOREIGN ARMS SALESMEN AS A RESULT OF THE RECENT DOWNTURN IN RELATIONS WITH THE USSR.

4. ADMIRAL ZIKRY SAID THAT HE WAS CONCERNED THAT THE SOVIETS NOW MIGHT SEEK TO CREATE TROUBLE IN EGYPT. HE SAID HE WAS NOT WORRIED ABOUT THE ARMED FORCES WHICH ARE "100 PERCENT ANTI-COMMUNIST," BUT RATHER WITH OTHER SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY. HE SAID THE SOVIETS HAD BEEN HERE LONG ENOUGH TO ESTABLISH ROOTS AMONG SOME EGYPTIAN GROUPS, AND THESE COULD BE SERIOUSLY DISRUPTIVE. (ALTHOUGH NOT SPECIFIC ON THIS POINT, PRESUMABLY HE WAS REFERRING TO STUDENTS, LABOR LEADERS, LEFTIST POLITICIANS, ETC.)

5. ADMIRAL ZIKRY SAID THAT ABOVE ALL, EGYPT NEEDED PEACE. THE WARS WITH ISRAEL HAD AMOST DESTROYED THE COUNTRY. HE SAID HE WAS THANKFUL THAT EGYPT, AND SPECIFICALLY THE EGYPTIAN NAVY, HAD NOT BECOME EMBROILED IN THE LEBANON SITUATION, AND HE HOPED THAT EGYPT WOULD CONTINUE TO STAY OUT. HE HAD NO ENTHUSIASM FOR A POSSIBLE COMBINED ARAB MILITARY SOLUTION IN LEBANON.

6. ON THE PERSONAL SIDE, ADMIRAL ZIKRY SPOKE AT SOME LENGTH ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCE AT THE INDIAN MILITARY STAFF COLLEGE IN WELLINGTON, SOUTH INDIA WHICH HE ATTENDED IN 1958 AND WHICH HE APPARENTLY ENJOYED. HE RELATED NUMEROUS GOOD NATURED ANECDOTES ABOUT INDIAN DIETARY, HYGENIC AND HIRSUTE CUSTOMS, DEMONSTRATING A KEEN SENSE OF HUMOR. ADMIRAL ZIKRY DRINKS MODERATELY AND GENUINELY ENJOYS SOCIAL GATHERINGS. HE DIDN'T LEAVE THIS DINNER PARTY UNTIL TWO IN THE MORNING.

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